

VZCZCXRO5052
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH RUEHTRO
DE RUEHGO #0387/01 1361028
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 151028Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7610
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1198
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4742
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8286
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5848
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1601
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1620
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000387

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: FOLLOWING THE RELIEF SUPPLY CHAIN

REF: RANGOON 365

RANGOON 00000387 001.2 OF 002

¶1. (SBU) Summary. U Aung Tun Khaing of the Department of Social Welfare explained a three-part system through which the GOB has thus far delivered 1,816 tons of international relief supplies to Cyclone Nargis victims. The supplies, transported to the affected regions primarily by ship, reach twenty townships in the Irrawaddy delta. Several other governments, including the German, Swiss, and Singaporean governments, deliver aid through INGOs, the UN, or the GOB. We spoke with contacts from Adventist Relief and Development Agency (ADRA) who asserted that their representatives had been misquoted in the May 14 New York Times article on Cyclone Nargis assistance and stated ADRA had no indication that the GOB was diverting supplies from storm victims. End Summary.

Where the Burmese Say It All Goes

¶2. (SBU) The GOB has created a network of distribution camps throughout the Irrawaddy delta region that gets supplies to Cyclone Nargis victims efficiently, explained U Aung Tun Khaing, Acting Director General of the Department of Social Welfare. The Department of Social Welfare has created a base office in Rangoon and coordinates the distribution of relief to the delta. The staging grounds that the government has established are in Patheingyi and Rangoon. The GOB feeds supplies to the cyclone-devastated delta region from both. In response to Poloff's question of whether it would be more efficient to take C-130 aircraft to Patheingyi, U Aung Tun Khaing indicated that the airport does not have the infrastructure to receive shipments there. He added that most supplies to the delta went to areas closer to Rangoon.

¶3. (SBU) From Rangoon and Patheingyi, relief supplies are transported to four intermediary camps, located in Labutta, Myaung Mya, Bogale, and Mawlamyine Island. These camps are in the worst-hit areas, where supplies can go directly to the victims, said U Aung Tun Khaing. While he did not have a list of where donated relief supplies from the USG or other donors go, he showed Poloff a list of the twenty townships that donated supplies have reached. As of the evening of May

14, 1,816.02 tons of donated relief supplies had been distributed by ship, helicopter and truck. The list that U Aung Tun Khaing provided showed that about 80 percent of international relief reaches the delta region by ship. The GOB transports the remainder by helicopter (9 percent) and truck (11 percent). This tracks with a report in the government newspaper, New Light of Myanmar, on May 15 that 2,300 kilograms of tents, tarps, medicine, bottled water, rice, clothes, and utensils had been sent by helicopter to Bogale township the previous day. Of the twenty townships in the delta region that relief supplies have reached, the greatest amount goes to Pyapon, Mawbin, Bogale, Dedaye, and Pathein.

Donations from Other Countries

¶4. (SBU) Several other countries have delivered relief supplies to Burma in the past few days. Early on the morning of May 15, a flight from Germany delivered seven water purification systems, including three that can desalinate water. They passed the systems directly to the World Food Program (WFP), said Christian Scheibe of the German Embassy. While they are limited in what they can do to monitor the effect of the systems, Scheibe hoped that relief workers would gain access to the delta "soon" to assist in monitoring. The German Ambassador expressed concern that they might not be set up properly without German experts to install, but expressed confidence that the purification units would go to the delta.

¶5. (SBU) The Swiss Ambassador from Bangkok arrived to deliver a shipment of goods to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA). Hans Peter Lenz of the Swiss Agency for

RANGOON 00000387 002.2 OF 002

Development and Cooperation explained that the Swiss government has worked with ADRA in the past and the group has worked in the Irrawaddy delta region for the past two years with good access to the area. Lenz arrived from Switzerland on May 9 and hoped to reach the delta region himself soon. He noted, however, that he is not sure when the GOB will grant him permission to travel.

¶6. (SBU) Singaporean Ambassador Robert Chua has overseen small daily shipments of medicine from a private charity in Singapore since last week. He explained that he operates off of the assurances of the GOB that supplies reach cyclone victims. He admitted that he does not know exactly where supplies go, but hoped to get better information and access later. Ambassador Chua said that even if some supplies have been diverted, he had confidence that relief goods were making it directly to the victims of the cyclone and therefore, he was helping.

UN and INGO Perspectives

¶7. (SBU) Acting UN Resident Coordinator Dan Baker assured us employees in the delta had seen no evidence assistance was being diverted. He assured us also that the UN would ask its employees to watch for U.S. relief goods being delivered on the ground.

¶8. (SBU) Contacts from ADRA asserted that their representatives had been misquoted in yesterday's New York Times article that reported assistance was being diverted. Today ADRA representatives assured us that they had no indication the GOB had diverted any of its aid. They further explained that they have no indication that aid diversion is a growing problem. All of their requests for visas for international visitors have been granted. Thus far, they have been able to deliver aid unimpeded to all places they have tried to access.

¶9. (SBU) Comment: All donors and the UN recognize the

political sensitivity of reports of donated relief supplies being diverted. The UN and INGOs are trying to monitor from the receiving end in the delta. In the contacts we have made with the Ministry of Social Welfare, officials indicated their willingness to be transparent in where the relief supplies are going, and we will continue to monitor local markets for donated goods regularly. End Comment.
VILLAROSA